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919 7590 01/28/2010

PITNEY BOWES INC.
35 WATERVIEW DRIVE
MSC 26-22
SHELTON, CT 06484-3000

EXAMINER

ERB, NATHAN

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3628

DATE MAILED: 01/28/2010

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/777,592

02/05/2001

Frederick W. Ryan JR.

F-235

3158

TITLE OF INVENTION: MAIL PIECE VERIFICATION SYSTEM HAVING FORENSIC ACCOUNTING CAPABILITY

APPLN. TYPE	SMALL ENTITY	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	NO	\$1510	\$300	\$0	\$1810	04/28/2010

THE APPLICATION IDENTIFIED ABOVE HAS BEEN EXAMINED AND IS ALLOWED FOR ISSUANCE AS A PATENT. PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS CLOSED. THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS. THIS APPLICATION IS SUBJECT TO WITHDRAWAL FROM ISSUE AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE OFFICE OR UPON PETITION BY THE APPLICANT. SEE 37 CFR 1.313 AND MPEP 1308.

THE ISSUE FEE AND PUBLICATION FEE (IF REQUIRED) MUST BE PAID WITHIN THREE MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS NOTICE OR THIS APPLICATION SHALL BE REGARDED AS ABANDONED. THIS STATUTORY PERIOD CANNOT BE EXTENDED. SEE 35 U.S.C. 151. THE ISSUE FEE DUE INDICATED ABOVE DOES NOT REFLECT A CREDIT FOR ANY PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE IN THIS APPLICATION. IF AN ISSUE FEE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN PAID IN THIS APPLICATION (AS SHOWN ABOVE), THE RETURN OF PART B OF THIS FORM WILL BE CONSIDERED A REQUEST TO REAPPLY THE PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE TOWARD THE ISSUE FEE NOW DUE.

HOW TO REPLY TO THIS NOTICE:

I. Review the SMALL ENTITY status shown above.

If the SMALL ENTITY is shown as YES, verify your current SMALL ENTITY status:

A. If the status is the same, pay the TOTAL FEE(S) DUE shown above.

B. If the status above is to be removed, check box 5b on Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal and pay the PUBLICATION FEE (if required) and twice the amount of the ISSUE FEE shown above, or

If the SMALL ENTITY is shown as NO:

A. Pay TOTAL FEE(S) DUE shown above, or

B. If applicant claimed SMALL ENTITY status before, or is now claiming SMALL ENTITY status, check box 5a on Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal and pay the PUBLICATION FEE (if required) and 1/2 the ISSUE FEE shown above.

II. PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL, or its equivalent, must be completed and returned to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) with your ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). If you are charging the fee(s) to your deposit account, section "4b" of Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal should be completed and an extra copy of the form should be submitted. If an equivalent of Part B is filed, a request to reapply a previously paid issue fee must be clearly made, and delays in processing may occur due to the difficulty in recognizing the paper as an equivalent of Part B.

III. All communications regarding this application must give the application number. Please direct all communications prior to issuance to Mail Stop ISSUE FEE unless advised to the contrary.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Utility patents issuing on applications filed on or after Dec. 12, 1980 may require payment of maintenance fees. It is patentee's responsibility to ensure timely payment of maintenance fees when due.

PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL

**Complete and send this form, together with applicable fee(s), to: Mail Mail Stop ISSUE FEE
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INSTRUCTIONS: This form should be used for transmitting the ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). Blocks 1 through 5 should be completed where appropriate. All further correspondence including the Patent, advance orders and notification of maintenance fees will be mailed to the current correspondence address as indicated unless corrected below or directed otherwise in Block 1, by (a) specifying a new correspondence address; and/or (b) indicating a separate "FEE ADDRESS" for maintenance fee notifications.

CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS (Note: Use Block 1 for any change of address)

919 7590 01/28/2010

**PITNEY BOWES INC.
35 WATERVIEW DRIVE
MSC 26-22
SHELTON, CT 06484-3000**

Note: A certificate of mailing can only be used for domestic mailings of the Fee(s) Transmittal. This certificate cannot be used for any other accompanying papers. Each additional paper, such as an assignment or formal drawing, must have its own certificate of mailing or transmission.

Certificate of Mailing or Transmission

I hereby certify that this Fee(s) Transmittal is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage for first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Mail Stop ISSUE FEE address above, or being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO (571) 273-2885, on the date indicated below.

(Depositor's name)
(Signature)
(Date)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/777,592 02/05/2001 Frederick W. Ryan JR. F-235 3158

TITLE OF INVENTION: MAIL PIECE VERIFICATION SYSTEM HAVING FORENSIC ACCOUNTING CAPABILITY

APPLN. TYPE	SMALL ENTITY	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
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nonprovisional NO \$1510 \$300 \$0 \$1810 04/28/2010

EXAMINER	ART UNIT	CLASS-SUBCLASS
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ERB, NATHAN 3628 705-404000

1. Change of correspondence address or indication of "Fee Address" (37 CFR 1.363).

- ☐ Change of correspondence address (or Change of Correspondence Address form PTO/SB/122) attached.
- ☐ "Fee Address" indication (or "Fee Address" Indication form PTO/SB/47; Rev 03-02 or more recent) attached. **Use of a Customer Number is required.**

2. For printing on the patent front page, list

- (1) the names of up to 3 registered patent attorneys or agents OR, alternatively, 1 _____
- (2) the name of a single firm (having as a member a registered attorney or agent) and the names of up to 2 registered patent attorneys or agents. If no name is listed, no name will be printed. 2 _____
- 3 _____

3. ASSIGNEE NAME AND RESIDENCE DATA TO BE PRINTED ON THE PATENT (print or type)

PLEASE NOTE: Unless an assignee is identified below, no assignee data will appear on the patent. If an assignee is identified below, the document has been filed for recordation as set forth in 37 CFR 3.11. Completion of this form is NOT a substitute for filing an assignment.

(A) NAME OF ASSIGNEE (B) RESIDENCE: (CITY and STATE OR COUNTRY)

Please check the appropriate assignee category or categories (will not be printed on the patent) : ☐ Individual ☐ Corporation or other private group entity ☐ Government

4a. The following fee(s) are submitted:

- ☐ Issue Fee
- ☐ Publication Fee (No small entity discount permitted)
- ☐ Advance Order - # of Copies _____

4b. Payment of Fee(s); (Please first reapply any previously paid issue fee shown above)

- ☐ A check is enclosed.
- ☐ Payment by credit card. Form PTO-2038 is attached.
- ☐ The Director is hereby authorized to charge the required fee(s), any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number _____ (enclose an extra copy of this form).

5. Change in Entity Status (from status indicated above)

- ☐ a. Applicant claims SMALL ENTITY status. See 37 CFR 1.27. ☐ b. Applicant is no longer claiming SMALL ENTITY status. See 37 CFR 1.27(g)(2).

NOTE: The Issue Fee and Publication Fee (if required) will not be accepted from anyone other than the applicant; a registered attorney or agent; or the assignee or other party in interest as shown by the records of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Authorized Signature _____

Date _____

Typed or printed name _____

Registration No. _____

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.311. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450.

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09/777,592	02/05/2001	Frederick W. Ryan JR.	F-235	3158
919	7590	01/28/2010	EXAMINER	
PITNEY BOWES INC. 35 WATERVIEW DRIVE MSC 26-22 SHELTON, CT 06484-3000			ERB, NATHAN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3628	
DATE MAILED: 01/28/2010				

Determination of Patent Term Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154 (b) (application filed on or after May 29, 2000)

The Patent Term Adjustment to date is 1680 day(s). If the issue fee is paid on the date that is three months after the mailing date of this notice and the patent issues on the Tuesday before the date that is 28 weeks (six and a half months) after the mailing date of this notice, the Patent Term Adjustment will be 1680 day(s).

If a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) was filed in the above-identified application, the filing date that determines Patent Term Adjustment is the filing date of the most recent CPA.

Applicant will be able to obtain more detailed information by accessing the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) WEB site (<http://pair.uspto.gov>).

Any questions regarding the Patent Term Extension or Adjustment determination should be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration at (571)-272-7702. Questions relating to issue and publication fee payments should be directed to the Customer Service Center of the Office of Patent Publication at 1-(888)-786-0101 or (571)-272-4200.

Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/777,592	RYAN, FREDERICK W.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	NATHAN ERB	3628	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the decision of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences dated 25 September 2009.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 2,4,7,9,11,14,16,18 and 22-24.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☒ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
(a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
(b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____. |
| 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date <u>20031218</u> | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
| | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____. |

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone call with Attorney Brian Lemm on January 13, 2010.

Claims 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 16, 18, and 22-24 of the application have been amended as follows:

2. (Currently amended) A mail piece verification system for processing mail pieces, the mail pieces having associated therewith respective mail piece data, the mail piece verification system comprising:

a data center; and

a plurality of mail processing centers in operative communication with ~~a plurality of mail processing centers,~~the data center;

the data center ~~including~~storing a plurality of account files corresponding to a plurality of postage metering systems;

the data center being ~~adapted~~configured to:

store reset data in each of the plurality of account files representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively;

Art Unit: 3628

receive the respective mail piece data corresponding to the mail pieces from the plurality of mail processing centers;

store empirical data in each of the plurality of account files representative of mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively;

conduct a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system using a previously defined time period over which to conduct the forensic accounting analysis;

determine, by the forensic accounting analysis, that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system; and

download graphic data to the selected postage metering system ~~to~~ be which is then included in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system.~~

4. (Currently amended) The mail piece verification system of claim 2, wherein the data center is further ~~adapted~~ configured to:

conduct an inspection of the selected postage metering system ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system.~~

7. (Currently amended) The mail piece verification system of claim 2, wherein the data center is further ~~adapted~~ configured to:

issue instructions to the plurality of mail processing centers to increase a sample rate for mail pieces including mail piece data corresponding to the selected postage metering system ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system.~~

9. (Currently amended) A method of operating a mail piece verification system for processing mail pieces, the mail pieces having associated therewith respective mail piece data, the method comprising:

receiving the mail pieces at a plurality of mail processing centers that have been prepared by a plurality of postage metering systems;

obtaining the respective mail piece data from the mail pieces;

maintaining a plurality of account files corresponding to the plurality of postage metering systems;

storing reset data in each of the plurality of account files representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively;

using the respective mail piece data, storing empirical data in each of the plurality of account files representative of mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively;

conducting, by a data center, a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system using a previously defined time period over which to conduct the forensic accounting analysis;

determining, by the forensic accounting analysis, that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system; and

Art Unit: 3628

downloading graphic data to the selected postage metering system ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system~~, the graphic data be which is then included in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising:

conducting an inspection of the selected postage metering system ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system~~.

16. (Currently amended) A method of operating a data center for processing data associated with mail pieces and a plurality of postage metering systems for preparing the mail pieces, the method comprising:

obtaining reset data representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems;

obtaining empirical data representative of mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems;

conducting, by the data center, a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system using a previously defined time period over which to conduct the forensic accounting analysis;

determining, by the forensic accounting analysis, that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system; and

Art Unit: 3628

downloading graphic data to the selected postage metering system ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system~~, the graphic data for inclusion on which is then included in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system.

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

conducting an inspection of the selected postage metering system ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system~~.

22. (Currently amended) The mail piece verification system of claim 2, wherein the data center is further ~~adapted~~ configured to:

issue a new serial number to the selected postage metering system to replace an existing serial number of the selected postage metering system ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system~~.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising:

issuing a new serial number to the selected postage metering system to replace an existing serial number ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system~~;

allowing normal processing of mail pieces containing the new serial number; and

instructing the plurality of mail processing centers to withhold normal processing of mail pieces containing the existing serial number.

Art Unit: 3628

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

issuing a new serial number to the selected postage metering system to replace an existing serial number ~~if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system;~~

providing instructions to allow normal processing of mail pieces containing the new serial number; and

providing instructions to withhold normal processing of mail pieces containing the existing serial number.

The abstract of the application has been amended as follows:

A mail piece verification system for processing mail pieces having associated therewith ~~respective~~ mail piece data. The system includes a plurality of postage metering systems for preparing mail pieces, a plurality of mail processing centers for receiving mail pieces and obtaining the ~~respective~~ mail piece data, and a data center means in operative communication with the plurality of postage metering systems and the plurality of mail processing centers, the data center means including a plurality of ~~account files corresponding to the plurality of postage metering systems.~~ The data center means stores reset data in each of ~~[[the]]~~ a plurality of account files representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, ~~respectively,~~ receives ~~respective~~ mail piece data corresponding to the mail pieces from the plurality of mail processing centers, ~~uses the respective mail piece data,~~ ~~storing~~ stores empirical data in each of the plurality of account files representative of

Art Unit: 3628

mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, ~~respectively~~, and conducts a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system.

Oath/Declaration

The oath or declaration is defective. A new oath or declaration in compliance with 37 CFR 1.67(a) identifying this application by application number and filing date is required. See MPEP §§ 602.01 and 602.02.

The oath or declaration is defective because:

It does not state that the person making the oath or declaration has reviewed and understands the contents of the specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment specifically referred to in the oath or declaration.

Applicant is now required to submit a substitute declaration or oath to correct the deficiencies set forth above in this communication. The substitute oath or declaration must be filed within the THREE MONTH shortened statutory period set for reply in the "Notice of Allowability" (PTO-37). Extensions of time may NOT be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136. Failure to timely file the substitute declaration (or oath) will result in **ABANDONMENT** of the application. The transmittal letter accompanying the declaration (or oath) should indicate the date of the "Notice of Allowance" (PTOL-85) and the application number in the upper right hand corner.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to NATHAN ERB whose telephone number is (571) 272-7606. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM.

Art Unit: 3628

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on (571) 272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

NATHAN ERB
Examiner
Art Unit 3628

Nhe

/JOHN W HAYES/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3628

Art Unit: 3628

Allowable Subject Matter

1. Claims 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, and 22-24 are allowed.
2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claim 2

The closest prior art of record is Hunter, U.S. Patent No. 5,280,531, and Webb, Warren, "Electronic Stamps Lick Internet Security (How It Works)," EDN, Vol. 43, No. 16, August 3, 1998, p. 44(2).

Hunter discloses:

- a mail piece verification system for processing mail pieces, the mail pieces having associated therewith respective mail piece data;
- the data center including a plurality of account files corresponding to a plurality of postage metering systems;
- the data center being adapted to store reset data in each of the plurality of account files representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively;
- store empirical data in each of the plurality of account files representative of mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively;
- conduct a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system using a previously defined time period over which to conduct the forensic accounting analysis;

Art Unit: 3628

- wherein the data center initiates responsive action if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system.

Webb discloses methods for countering postal indicium fraud.

As per claim 2, the closest prior art of record taken either individually or in combination with other prior art of record fails to teach or suggest determine, by the forensic accounting analysis, that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system; and download graphic data to the selected postage metering system which is then included in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system.

Claim 9

The closest prior art of record is Hunter, U.S. Patent No. 5,280,531, and Webb, Warren, "Electronic Stamps Lick Internet Security (How It Works)," EDN, Vol. 43, No. 16, August 3, 1998, p. 44(2).

Hunter discloses:

- a method of operating a mail piece verification system for processing mail pieces, the mail pieces having associated therewith respective mail piece data;
- obtaining the respective mail piece data from the mail pieces;
- maintaining a plurality of account files corresponding to the plurality of postage metering systems;
- storing reset data in each of the plurality of account files representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively;

Art Unit: 3628

- using the respective mail piece data, storing empirical data in each of the plurality of account files representative of mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems, respectively;

- conducting a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system using a previously defined time period over which to conduct the forensic accounting analysis;

- initiating responsive action if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system.

Webb discloses methods for countering postal indicium fraud.

As per claim 9, the closest prior art of record taken either individually or in combination with other prior art of record fails to teach or suggest determining, by the forensic accounting analysis, that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system; and downloading graphic data to the selected postage metering system which is then included in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system.

Claim 16

The closest prior art of record is Hunter, U.S. Patent No. 5,280,531, and Webb, Warren, "Electronic Stamps Lick Internet Security (How It Works)," EDN, Vol. 43, No. 16, August 3, 1998, p. 44(2).

Hunter discloses:

Art Unit: 3628

- a method of operating a data center for processing data associated with mail pieces and a plurality of postage metering systems for preparing mail pieces;
- obtaining reset data representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems;
- obtaining empirical data representative of mailing activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems;
- conducting a forensic accounting analysis of the empirical data and the reset data associated with a selected postage metering system using a previously defined time period over which to conduct the forensic accounting analysis;
- initiating responsive action if the forensic accounting analysis reveals that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system.

Webb discloses methods for countering postal indicium fraud.

As per claim 16, the closest prior art of record taken either individually or in combination with other prior art of record fails to teach or suggest determining, by the forensic accounting analysis, that the empirical data is not consistent with the reset data for the selected postage metering system; and downloading graphic data to the selected postage metering system which is then included in the mail piece data of mail pieces subsequently prepared by the selected postage metering system.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably

Art Unit: 3628

accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to NATHAN ERB whose telephone number is (571) 272-7606. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM.

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NATHAN ERB
Examiner
Art Unit 3628

nhe

/JOHN W HAYES/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3628

Application/Control Number: 09/777,592
Art Unit: 3628

Page 15